

Mr. Chairman,

As you are aware, technology changes daily, if not instantaneous at times. It seems electronics are released and almost before our eyes become outdated or obsolete in the name of "progress". This holds true for every industry including public safety. From horse drawn pumpers in the early 1900's to modern day fire engines and from the Cadillac ambulances in 1972 to a Type III mod; design innovations and technology have made emergency vehicles safer in the name of "progress". This progress has made certain aspects obsolete, and in some cases unsafe. I believe Senate Bill 1084 aims to correct some of this.

Senate Bill 1084 would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to delete a requirement that an emergency vehicle have a red light mounted on the roof. On a modern ambulance or fire engine in which the vehicle height is nearly 10 feet, a rotating or flashing light mounted on the roof adds very little in terms of emergency vehicle warning lights, and with a type III ambulance, this type of light alone would not provide the 360 degrees of emergency lighting as required. New technology such as the Light Emitting Diode (LED) have allowed smaller and more powerful emergency lights to be installed in new ways and locations that provide both better vehicle visibility while responding and while operating on the scene of an emergency. While changes in manufacturing now allow emergency lighting to be directly integrated into a vehicles wiring harness when it is ordered as an emergency vehicle, the Michigan Vehicle Code has not been able to keep up.

While this is a seemingly minor change to the Vehicle Code, the impact across the state would be widespread. Many public safety agencies may currently operate emergency vehicles that are not in compliance with the requirement to have a light affixed to the roof of the vehicle. This oversight was probably not done in malice, but in an attempt to embrace new technology and design safer emergency vehicles. The passage of Senate Bill 1084 would bring these vehicles into compliance with the Vehicle Code, allow the Vehicle Code to move into the 21st century without a major overhaul, more closely reflect similar measures being taken across the country, and potentially save public safety agencies across the state thousands of dollars if they were forced to comply with the Michigan Vehicle Code as it stands today.

I fully support Senate Bill 1084 and appreciate your time and consideration in taking up this bill.

Thank You,

Carl Arnold
Lieutenant
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